

the integrity of a genuine social safety net—big issue for developed countries. We have lower unemployment and greater inequality; they have more equality and higher unemployment. How can we bridge the gap? And we're interested in the experiments in Great Britain and the experiments in the Netherlands and in other countries. We have an interest. And if those countries succeed, we are not threatened; our lives are enhanced. And I think we should all have that attitude.

Finally, let me say that this is about more than economics. It's even about more than having our customers happy, although I must say one of the biggest kicks I've gotten as President is when a major national business magazine said that the Social Security agency was the best large organization in America, public or private, at providing telephone service to its customers. I like that.

This is about, in my judgment, the preservation of the vitality of democracy. In some countries that are new democracies, it may be about the preservation of democracy itself. But in the end, every one of us serves because people believe in the possibility of self-government through Representatives. To the extent that people do not believe their Representatives will handle their money for public purposes the way they themselves would, democracy itself is diminished; human potential is diminished. The capacity for worldwide cooperation is diminished.

So I say again, you may not get the headlines back home for this. You may have to tell your own jokes because you won't be able to make anybody else laugh. But never underestimate the profound and enduring importance of what it is you have come here to discuss. We are honored to have you here, and we thank you for your contribution and your dedication.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph Nye president, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government; Prime Minister Jenny Shipley of New Zealand; Vice President Gustavo Bell of Colombia; and Bradford Smith, vice president, Ford Foundation.

Proclamation 7163—Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 1999

January 15, 1999

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

January 15 would have marked the 70th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man of great vision and moral purpose whose dream for our Nation set into motion such powerful, sweeping changes that their impact is still being felt today. While he was taken from us too soon, we still have with us the gifts of his vision, convictions, eloquence, and example. We still hear the echo of his voice telling us that "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

We know what Dr. King did for others. He energized and mobilized a generation of Americans, black and white, to join in the struggle for civil rights, to respond to violence, hatred, and unjust incarceration with the spirit of peace, love, and righteousness. He taught us that we could not claim America as the land of justice, freedom, and equality as long as millions of our citizens continually and systematically faced discriminatory and oppressive treatment. He challenged us to recognize that the fundamental rights of all Americans are forever interconnected, for "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Martin Luther King, Jr., awakened America's conscience to the immorality of racism. He was the driving force behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. For African Americans, this landmark legislation meant that the opportunity for a quality education would no longer be impossible, the levers of the voting booth would no longer be out of reach, and the purchase of a dream home would no longer be unattainable. Millions of Americans—of every race and background and culture—live brighter lives today because of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King's dream of unity for America did not die with him. Today, as our Nation becomes increasingly multiracial and multiethnic, his compelling vision is more important than ever, and the means for realizing it are now within our reach. This past year, as part of my Initiative on Race, Americans across the country participated in thousands of honest and open conversations about race in a sincere effort to heal our divisions and move toward genuine reconciliation. We learned much about the roots of prejudice; but more important, we learned much about how to overcome it. In community after community, in every field of endeavor from sports and education to business and religion, we discovered organizations and programs that have succeeded in bridging gaps between people of different races and cultures. These promising practices offer us both realistic guidelines for everyday action and genuine hope that we can respect one another's differences and embrace the values that unite us.

Now it is our turn to answer the question, "What are you doing for others?" As part of our response, each year since 1994 we have made the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday a national day of service, a day on which to honor Dr. King's legacy through service projects across our country. Instead of taking a day off, millions of our fellow Americans respond to the needs of their communities, through activities like tutoring children, sheltering the homeless, making schoolyards safer, or making public parks more inviting.

Let us make this year's observance the beginning of a broader effort to improve our communities and the lives of our fellow Americans, to make the personal choices and take the personal actions that will bridge the gaps—racial and otherwise—that keep us from becoming the people we were meant to be. Working together, joining our hearts and our hands, we will succeed in building One America for the 21st century and in fulfilling the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Monday, January 18, 1999, as the Martin Luther King, Jr.,

Federal Holiday. I call upon all Americans to observe this occasion and to honor Dr. King's legacy with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 19, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 20.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 11

In the morning, the President met with President Carlos Menem of Argentina once in the Oval Office, and again later in the Cabinet Room.

The President announced his intention to appoint Thomas H. Baer, Elizabeth Holtzman, and Richard Ben-Veniste as members of the Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group.

January 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Alexandria, VA, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate C. Richard Barnes to be Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.